

ABOUT BOOKS

Assault and Pepper

By Leslie Budewitz

Published 2015 by the Berkley Publishing Group, a division of the Penguin Group, New York, NY

\$7.99 softcover

Bigfork author Leslie Budewitz has set her latest mystery – the first in a new series – in Seattle, a city she knows well and harbors deep affection for.

Pepper Reece is fairly new to Pike's Place Market as a shop owner, but she has lived in the city all her life. She purchased the Seattle Spice Shop after her job at a law firm ended and now fills her days mixing spice and tea blends and managing a congenial staff of like-minded employees.

The atmosphere among shop owners and vendors is friendly, until a bedraggled stranger shows up and Pepper witnesses him following one of her employees. When the stranger is found poisoned on her shop's doorstep the next day, an investigation ensues that brings her ex-husband, Tag, a bike-riding Seattle policeman, around. A little romance lingers on the fringe, adding more "spice" to the tale.

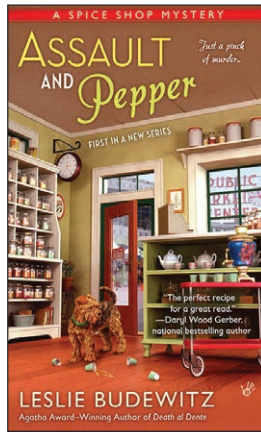
Pepper endeavors to clear the name of her accused employee and find the real killer in a storyline that's infused with the author's love and knowledge of good food and wine. Budewitz's descriptions of the city's geography and the smells and sounds of the waterfront are so vivid, a person could enviably picture themselves in the setting.

Very subtle clues to the killer's identity are woven deftly throughout the story, but readers are likely to be quite surprised at the conclusion!

The books wraps up with a chapter containing spice notes and recipes for such tantalizing treats as Salty Oat Cookies and Mexican coffee.

Budewitz won the 2011 Agatha Award for Best Nonfiction for *Books, Crooks, and Counselors: How to Write Accurately About Criminal Law and Courtroom Procedure*, and another Agatha for Best First Novel in 2014 for *Death al Dente*, the inaugural title in her Food Lovers Village Mystery series.

– Judy Shafter



Sun River Valley History II

By the Sun River Valley Historical Society
Published December 2014 by Sweetgrass Books, Helena, MT

\$65 hardcover

We've seen local historians and historical societies compile books on settlers and schools across the state in an effort to capture history before those who lived it are gone. It's an inspiring and endearing undertaking.

Sun River Valley History II is the most recent example. A Herculean enterprise, this 650-page tome is the second installment in the Sun River Valley Historical Society's effort to record local history. The group, formed in 1977, counts among its accomplishments "holding back the ravages of time" at Fort Shaw, a military post established in 1867.

The communities of Vaughn, Simms, Sun River and Fort Shaw each get treatment here, as do the construction of Gibson Dam and the development of agriculture in the valley, which rests between Great Falls and Augusta. The book also includes a timeline that begins with the Louisiana Purchase in 1803; 768 historic photos; an Honor Roll of men and women who served in the military; and rosters of those buried at local cemeteries.

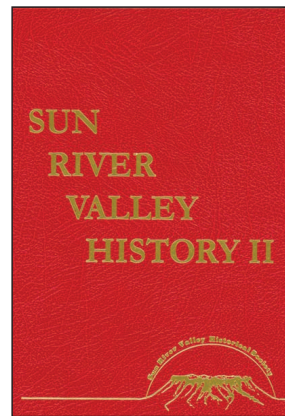
We discover that Sun River "was a rendezvous for cowboys, bullwackers, cattlemen, trappers and gamblers," first settled by John Largent, "a Virginian who was 6 feet 2 inches tall." And by 1883: "There are no snide goods for sale at Sun River ... nothing but No. 1 goods of any kind ..."

Soldiers at Fort Shaw earned \$13 a month and had to pay for their own uniforms. If rules were broken, "a soldier could look forward, perhaps, to a flogging or hanging by his thumbs." Nonetheless, the fort was home to a theatre and the Fort Shaw Dramatic Association, which staged performances and engaged "the services of occasional strolling players."

Floods repeatedly washed through the valley, including one in 1908 when a baby began crying as "his cradle floated in the rising water," rousing his family to safety.

This hefty accomplishment, 10 years in the making, is available by mail from the society: P.O. Box 155, Sun River, MT 59483 (add \$10 for shipping).

– Kristi Niemeyer



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Send us book ideas

Two Helena publishing companies welcome book ideas.

Farcountry Press invites writers, photographers and illustrators to submit their book ideas for consideration.

Farcountry publishes award-winning books on regional popular history, natural history and national parks for a general audience and for children.

The company also publishes color photography books on regions, states, cities and national parks, but generally does not publish poetry or fiction.

Please send book proposals to: Acquisitions, PO Box 5630, Helena, MT 59604. Include a self-addressed, stamped envelope or your materials will not be returned, and do not send original art or photographs. For more information, visit www.farcountrypress.com.

Riverbend Publishing also welcomes book proposals about Montana and the West. The company publishes award-winning books on regional history, natural history, photography and Glacier and Yellowstone national parks, plus cookbooks and fiction.

Send proposals to Editor, Riverbend Publishing, PO Box 5833, Helena, MT 59604. Visit www.riverbendpublishing.com for more information about the company.

FOR YOUNG READERS

Roadie The Ranch

Dog: Why Ranch Dogs Make Pretty Good Buddies

By Scott Haynes

Published by the author and printed and distributed by Midstates Printing in Aberdeen, SD

\$15 softcover

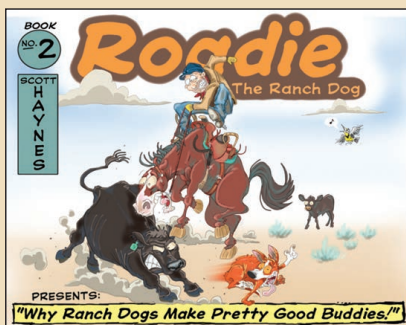
Author and illustrator Scott Haynes introduces young readers to new friends in the second installment of his Roadie The Ranch Dog series. Book two finds Roadie

roaming around the ranch, doing chores, and enjoying the everyday hustle and bustle of farm and ranch life. But he's not the only dog on the job in this colorful, rhyming children's book "devoted to the love of all ranch dogs – big and small, short and tall."

Roadie's antics include hurtling toward an angry bull in a cartoon with the caption: "When doctoring a calf, a ranch dog has your back!" And its corollary: "The rancher has theirs too, when a cow is on the attack."

Haynes, was raised on a farm and ranch operation in Saco. Growing up on Montana's Hi-Line gave him plenty of "ammo" for his cartoons. "A lot of my humor comes from the people I grew up around, and there was always a dog or two in the way," he explains.

The author now lives in Newcastle, WY, and has been a contract artist for Leanin' Tree Greeting Cards, and been commissioned by *Western Horseman Magazine*.



The Cow's Girl: The Making of a Real Cowgirl

By Charlotte Caldwell

Published 2015 by Barn Board Press, Helena, MT

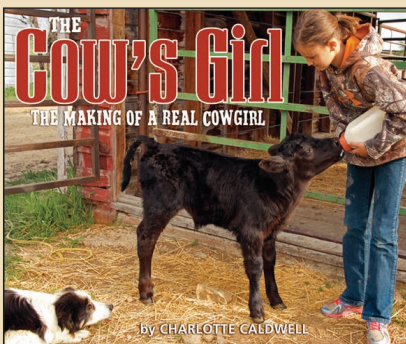
\$16.95 hardcover

For aspiring cowgirls and cowboys, Charlotte Caldwell's new book may quickly become a favorite. With 76 color photographs, the author illustrates life on a real working ranch, offering children and adults the opportunity to slip into a young girl's boots as she learns the ins and outs of being a cowgirl.

Written for those readers who may never get the chance to drive cattle with the wranglers, *The Cow's Girl* captures the true story of a girl's life on a family-owned ranch. Speaking from the point of view of a lovable, orphaned Black Angus calf, Caldwell treats readers to vivid descriptions of the Cow's Girl's responsibilities and the rousing fun she and her brothers have when the chores are done.

The story follows the girl and her family through the seasons as they perform daily chores, doctor the livestock, show 4-H animals at the fair, bale alfalfa hay, and drive cattle to better pastures. As the Cow's Girl learns the skills it takes to become a real cowgirl, the calf teaches readers about the tasks required to keep up the ranch and the health of its animals.

The Cow's Girl is the companion to Caldwell's 2013 book *The Cow's Boy: The Making of a Real Cowboy*.



Prairie Sunrise, My Montana Ranch Life

By Sierra Dawn

Published in 2014 by the author, Hinsdale, MT

\$17 softcover

Six-year-old Zora Rose romps through a year at her family's ranch in eastern Montana, explaining the routines and rituals of life on the prairie in words and photographs. The book captures the inflections of a precocious child, who loves her family and home, making it a pleasure to read.

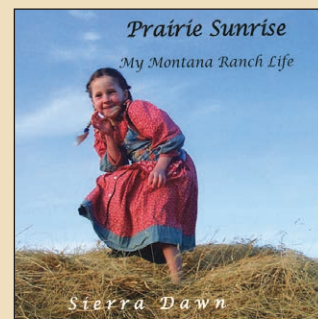
Part of her family's job is "to move the big grazers," a chore they accomplish "with horses and fences." She and her brother, Linden, ride drag, nudging the herd to fresh pasture or toward the corrals for vaccinations. The young cowpokes must remember a lot of rules, including "Don't turn your back to the herd and don't make a cow that is being a good girl trot."

In June, the kids patrol the banks of the creek looking for Garrison creeping foxtail, an invasive weed. "That means that it is selfish. It wants to have the whole creek for itself."

We learn about the perils of a hard winter, losing a favorite cat, cutting hay, and playing on the haystack, and the beauty of the moon and stars shining brightly on the prairie.

Whether you're a city slicker or country dweller, *Prairie Sunrise* offers a delightful kids-eye view of a fascinating and increasingly rare way of life.

– Kristi Niemeyer



Rubix Ruckus

Reubenstien:

Takes Himself on a Hike

By Jennifer Nitz; illustrated by Fernando Molinari

Published 2014 by the author, distributed by Itasca Books, Minneapolis, MN

\$15.95 softcover

Young readers will delight in meeting Rubix Ruckus Reubenstien, a friendly and curious canine who wakes from a nap one day to find the gate to his yard open. Thus begins his adventure.

Along the way, he sniffs, tracks and meets a variety of creatures who are as friendly as he is, greeting him by name. A rabbit, a fawn, a moose, and a heron are just a few of his discoveries.

From a pack of congenial wolves, Rubix learns many things about their behavior and habitat. A wise crow gives Rubix a lesson in respecting others and sharing. As a result of his outing, the affable dog is more aware of the different birds and animals in the forest near his home, and how important it is to care for and respect the natural world.

The book is generously illustrated with a combination of photographs and colorful paintings of animals.

Nitz lives in southwest Montana, where she and Rubix enjoy visits with young people at schools and libraries to tell their story and make new friends.

